REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The claims are 1-10.

The above amendment is responsive to points set forth in the Official Action.

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 3-5 and 7-10. However, for reasons set forth below, it is considered that all of the claims in this application are now in condition for allowance.

With regard to the rejection of claim 2 as indefinite, the rejected terminology has now been clarified.

In this regard, the color classification code is a code which is assigned to each of plural groups into which all paint colors have been classified according to their chromatic properties.

Chromatic properties mean Munsell's hue, brightness, chroma, etc. (see the present specification, page 9, lines 27 to 33).

The number of color classification codes is preferably 5 to 100.

Claims 1 and 6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hamlin et al. (U.S. 5,473,738) in view of what is commonly known in the art.

This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The invention as defined in above amended claim 1 is clearly and unobviously distinguished from the cited reference (U.S. 5,473,738: Hamlin), as follows:

(a) The present invention relates, in particular, to a method to retrieve a color which is approximate to a certain metallic paint color.

Hamlin has no disclosure about metallic paint color.

The Ostwald color system (which specifies color by a combination of the amount of white and black, and primary color), as mentioned in Hamlin, cannot reproduce metallic paint color.

(b) The present invention comprises " a step of retrieving a metallic paint color of an approximate color by applying approximate color computation for computing a color difference only to a metallic paint color having the same color classification as the one to which the specific metallic color belongs, among the plurality of metallic paint colors stored in the memory of the computer". This feature enables the quick retrieval of an approximate color.

(c) The present invention further recites that approximate color computation comprises weighting multi-angle colorimetric value. This weighting makes it possible to retrieve an approximate color which matches a visual sense of the color difference.

These features are in no way disclosed or suggested by Hamlin.

For the foregoing reasons, it is apparent that the rejection on Hamlin is untenable and should be withdrawn.

No further issues remaining, allowance of this application is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner has any comments or proposals for expediting prosecution, please contact undersigned at the telephone number below.

Respectfully submitted,

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